

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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ACTION NEA-10

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C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 5253

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, IS, US
SUBJECT: REPORT CONCERNING EXPULSION OF VICE CONSUL FROM SETTLEMENT

REF: STATE 100955

1. INCIDENT REFERRED TO IN AP TICKER OCCURRED IN APRIL. IT WAS BROUGHT TO MY ATTENTION BY FOREIGN MINISTER DAYAN IN A MEETING ON APRIL 14 ON OTHER SUBJECTS. DAYAN HAD RECEIVED A REPORT FROM A MILITARY GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL WHICH ALLEGED THAT VICE CONSUL HULL, WHO IS ASSIGNED TO THE AMERICAN CONSULATE IN JERUSALEM, HAD ENTERED THE MILITARY CONTROLLED SETTLEMENT AT HARIS UNDER FALSE PRETENSES, BY TELLING A GUARD THAT HE WAS A CIVILIAN WORKER WITHIN THE CAMP. THE GOI REPORT FURTHER ALLEGED THAT HE WAS NOTICED BY THE CAMP COMMANDER AFTER HE HAD "ASKED A GREAT MANY QUESTIONS," AND REQUESTED TO LEAVE. THE ALLEGATION CONTINUED THAT HE HAD REFUSED TO LEAVE OR TO IDENTIFY HIMSELF UNTIL THREATENED WITH ARREST AND TEMPORARILY DETAINED. THE REPORT CONTINUED THAT ONCE HE HAD ADMITTED HIS IDENTITY AND CONFIRMED IT WITH HIS IDENTITY CARD THAT HE WAS THEN PERMITTED TO LEAVE. DAYAN ASKED ME TO LOOK INTO THE MATTER, WHICH I DID IMMEDIATELY.

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2. I DISCUSSED THE ALLEGATIONS WITH CONSUL GENERAL NEWLIN THE SAME DAY, APRIL 14. NEWLIN INVESTIGATED AND DISCOVERED THAT MR. HULL HAD REPORTED IN WRITING ON THIS INCIDENT TO HIS SUPERVISOR THE DAY AFTER IT OCCURRED. FROM HIS ACCOUNT IT IS CLEAR THAT HE MADE NO EFFORT TO CONCEAL HIS IDENTITY IN ENTERING THE SITE

OF THIS SETTLEMENT; HIS AUTOMOBILE BORE DISTINCTIVE CC LICENSE PLATES AND HE WAS WAVED THROUGH BY THE GUARD WITHOUT QUESTION WHEN HE ASKED FOR THE SECRETARY OF THE SETTLEMENT. MOREOVER, THERE WERE NO SIGNS IDENTIFYING THE SETTLEMENT AS A MILITARY SITE (MR. HULL READS HEBREW).

3. FROM HULL'S DESCRIPTION IT IS APPARENT THAT HE SHOULD HAVE IDENTIFIED HIMSELF AS A CONSULAR OFFICIAL WHEN FIRST ASKED RATHER THAN INSISTING ON SEEING THE IDENTIFICATION OF THOSE ARMY PERSONNEL WHO WERE ASKING HIM TO IDENTIFY HIMSELF. OTHERWISE, CONSUL GENERAL NEWLIN AND I BELIEVE HE BEHAVED PROPERLY. THERE IS NO STANDING PROHIBITION ON CONSULAR OFFICIALS VISITING SETTLEMENTS IN THE WEST BANK, WHETHER MILITARY OR CIVILIAN, AND THIS VISIT WAS MADE WITH THE APPROVAL OF CONSUL GENERAL NEWLIN AS PART OF THE CONTINUING EFFORT TO PROVIDE UP-TO-DATE STATUS REPORTS TO THE DEPARTMENT ON ISRAELI SETTLEMENT ACTIVITIES IN THE WEST BANK. WE HAVE BEEN GIVEN NO INDICATION THAT SUCH VISITS ARE PROHIBITED BY THE ISRAELI AUTHORITIES.

4. I DISCUSSED THE MATTER FURTHER WITH FOREIGN MINISTER DAYAN LATER IN THE DAY ON APRIL 14 AND READ HIM THE STATEMENT MADE BY MR. HULL THE DAY AFTER THE EVENT. I SAID IT WAS MY CONCLUSION THAT THE ACCOUNT GIVEN BY THE MILITARY AUTHORITIES WAS NOT ACCURATE, THAT THE CONFIDENTIAL

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WHOLE PROBLEM WAS ONE OF A SIMPLE MISUNDERSTANDING WHICH WOULD HAVE BEEN CLEARED UP IMMEDIATELY HAD MR. HULL SHOWN HIS IDENTITY CARD MORE PROMPTLY. DAYAN ACCEPTED THIS EXPLANATION WITH NO ARGUMENT AND SAID THAT AS FAR AS HE WAS CONCERNED THE MATTER COULD BE CONSIDERED CLOSED. HE SAID HE WOULD SO INFORM THE PRIME MINISTER IN WHOSE PRESENCE HE HAD RAISED THE ISSUE.

5. SINCE THE MATTER HAD BEEN TAKEN UP ORIGINALLY WITH ME IN FRONT OF THE PRIME MINISTER AND A NOTETAKER WAS PRESENT, I HAVE WRITTEN A LETTER TO THE FOREIGN MINISTER ENCLOSING A COPY OF MR. HULL'S STATEMENT AND PUTTING ON RECORD THE FACT THAT DAYAN CONSIDERED THE CASE CLOSED. A COPY OF THIS LETTER IS ALSO BEING PROVIDED TO THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE.

6. COMMENT: TODAY'S NEWSPAPERS HAVE SEVERAL STORIES ON THIS INCIDENT, ALTHOUGH THEY DO NOT SEEM TO BE SEEKING TO EXAGGERATE ITS SIGNIFICANCE. ONE CANNOT EXCLUDE THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE IDF AUTHORITIES WERE SIGNALING A TIGHTENING OF RESTRICTIONS ON U.S. CONSULAR OFFICIALS SEEN AS OVERLY CURIOUS ABOUT WEST BANK SETTLEMENT ACTIVITIES. BUT FROM THE DESCRIPTION OF THE

INCIDENT GIVEN BY MR. HULL, WE BELIEVE THIS IS UNLIKELY.
THE SPATE OF PUBLICITY, HOWEVER, COULD PRODUCE SUCH A
RESULT.
LEWIS

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